



U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Kansas

NEWS RELEASE

Eric Melgren, U.S. Attorney

Contact: Kena Rice

(316) 269-6481

Headquarters

1200 Epic Center
301 N. Main
Wichita, Kansas 67202
(316)269-6481
FAX (316)269-6484

Topeka Office

444 Quincy
Topeka, Kansas 66683

Kansas City Office

500 State Avenue
Suite 360
Kansas City, Kansas
66101

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News releases are available at www.usdoj.gov/usao/ks/
January 26, 2004

DEFENDANT SENTENCED TO PRISON IN ALIEN SMUGGLING CASE

WICHITA, Kan. – A 19-year-old Mexican national who fell asleep at the wheel while driving 12 other illegals across the country has been sentenced to 46 months in federal prison, without parole, United States Attorney for Kansas Eric Melgren announced today.

The person sentenced, Ariel Rosales, who listed his address as Morristown, Tenn., crashed his Ford F-150 pickup into an oncoming semi-trailer truck on U.S. Highway 160 in Grant County, on August 21, 2003. One of the passengers who was riding in the back of the pickup was killed in the accident; and four others, including Rosales, were seriously injured, Melgren said.

Rosales was sentenced in the case here Monday by Senior U.S. District Judge Wesley E. Brown, who ordered the federal Bureau of Prisons to surrender Rosales to immigration authorities for deportation after Rosales completes the prison sentence. Rosales pleaded guilty November 3 to transporting illegal aliens within the United States, a felony offense.

–MORE–

Page 2

According to court documents, Rosales agreed to drive the 12 from Phoenix, Ariz., to Atlanta, Ga., and Newark, N.J., where they were hoping to find employment. The aliens each

had paid smugglers \$800 to guide them into the United States, and were to pay an additional \$800 upon reaching Atlanta or Newark. The aliens have since been voluntarily returned to Mexico, according the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

After driving all night from Phoenix, with 10 persons enclosed in the back of the pickup under a metal shell and two more in the front seat, at about 7:40 a.m., Rosales fell asleep while driving east on U.S. 160, veering into the west-bound lane and striking the oncoming semi, Melgren said. The accident occurred about seven miles west of Ulysses.

“Those involved in the illegal transporting of undocumented workers routinely endanger and abuse them,” Melgren said. “They will be dealt with accordingly.”

The case was investigated by the Kansas Highway Patrol and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brent Anderson.